

Message Text

SECRET

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46

ACTION EA-06

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJ: FORCE REDUCTIONS

1 IN THE COURSE OF A MEETING WITH MFA UNDER SECRETARY PHAEN WANNAMETHI ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS TODAY, HE RAISED WITH ME THE QUESTION OF FURTHER U.S. FORCE REDUCTIONS.

2. PHAEN DID NOT MENTION THE KRIANGSAK LETTER BUT STATED THAT THE RTG WAS ANXIOUS TO HAVE DECISIONS MADE ON THE NEXT STEPS WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN AND HE STRESSED THE DESIRE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO HAVE AN OVERALL PROGRAM COVERING BASE CLOSURES THROUGH MARCH 1976. PHAEN SAID THAT AT THIS STAGE IT WOULD BE BEST IF BASES WERE PHASED OUT ONE AT A TIME RATHER THAN HAVING PERSONNEL REDUCTIONS EFFECTED AT VARIOUS BASES. PHAEN EMPHASIZED THAT SEVERAL MINISTRIES WERE DESIROUS OF HAVING A PHASES SCHEDULE.

3. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, PHAEN STATED THAT THERE WERE NO POLICY DECISIONS WHICH WERE PENDING REGARDING BASE CLOSURES AND THAT SUPREME COMMAND WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR WORKING OUT THE DETAILS WITH THE U.S. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT SUPREME COMMAND WISHED TO SEE NKP CLOSURE NEXT FOLLOWED BY UDORN AND REPEATED THAT AN OVERALL PHASED SCHEME SHOULD BE ARRIVED AT AS SOON AS

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POSSIBLE.

4. COMMENT: THE FOREGOING CONFIRMS THAT WE ARE GETTING INCREASING PRESSURE TO WORK OUT NOT ONLY THE NEXT STEP BUT ALSO AN OVERALL SCHEME. IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE BASE ISSUE WERE ONCE AGAIN TO BECOME A CONTROVERSY AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IT IS LIKELY TO BECOME ONE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE IF THE IMPRESSION GETS ABOUT THAT ALL MOTION HAS STOPPED. A YOUNG OFFICER FROM MFA TOLD WILLIAM KLAUSNER OF THE ASIA FOUNDATION LAST WEEK THAT AT THE WORKING LEVEL IN THE MINISTRY THERE IS THE CONVICTION THAT THE AMERICANS ARE PLAYING AN ARTFUL DELAYING GAME BUT THAT THIS TACTIC WOULD NOT SUCCEED.

5. I REMAIN CONVINCED THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR QTE FACILITIES UNQTE OR QTE DEPOTS UNQTE CAN BE WORKED OUT WHEN WE KNOW WHAT RESIDUAL ACTIVITIES WE WANT TO MAINTAIN. I AM CONCERNED HOWEVER THAT ALLOWING A LOT OF HEAT TO GENERATE OVER QTE BASES UNQTE CAN MAKE THIS IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OUR LONG RANGE POSTURE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA MORE DIFFICULT.

WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

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